

Film Review: Brutal ‘The Woman’ Shocks With Bloody Satire

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 13, 2011 - 7:20pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – When Lucky McKee’s “The Woman” played at Sundance earlier this year it caused quite a stir, mostly thanks to the reports of an altercation that happened shortly after the screening in which someone questioned how something so extreme even got to Park City. While some midnight screenings at the fest have pushed boundaries before (“Saw,” “Haute Tension”), there is something so brutally in your face about the repulsive acts on display that it’s easy to see why buttons were pushed. This is daring, dark material that approaches satire in its exploration of the hideous underbelly of America. It’s “American Beauty” meets “Hostel”...and I mean that as a compliment.

Co-written and conceived by the legendary author Jack Ketchum (“The Girl Next Door”), “The Woman” is about a seemingly normal family. There’s a patriarch named Chris (Sean Bridgers), who has that sleazy used-car salesman vibe that would make anyone uncomfortable. There’s a matriarch named Belle (McKee regular Angela Bettis), a woman who seems constantly startled, as most abuse victims do. And there are two teenage children, Peg (Lauren Ashley Carter) and Brian (Zach Ran), along with a still-innocent young one (Shyla Molhusen).



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While Chris is hunting in the woods he stumbles upon a feral, filthy, half-naked woman (Polyanna McIntosh) who he shoots, brings home, and chains up in a shed in his backyard. As if this is completely normal, expected behavior, the family goes along with dear old dad’s plan, even after the woman bites off one of his fingers and eats it. The idea seems to be that the family is planning to domesticate and “save” this nature girl (although their actual motivations are too thinly-defined) but things naturally go haywire very quickly. Before long, dad is raping the woman and their only son is mutilating her naked body with pliers. And I won’t even begin to explain what happens to a sweet teacher who dares to investigate why Peg has become so withdrawn at school.

The question one has to ask when assessing “The Woman” is a simple one – is this misogyny or an examination of misogyny? Watching all of the female characters be brutalized in various ways by a horrendous human being (and the offspring he’s training in his footsteps) can be hard to take, especially for female viewers. Of course, the tables are eventually turned on this monster, but is it too little too late? I don’t believe so. I think McKee & Ketchum are tapping into something ABOUT misogyny in a daring, dark, in-your-face manner more than being misogynistic through their writing.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Woman” review.](#) [12]

‘The Woman’ stars Sean Bridgers, Angela Bettis, Lauren Ashley Carter, Zach Ran, and Polyanna McKintosh. It was written by Lucky McKee & Jack Ketchum and directed by McKee. It opens on October 14th, 2011 and is unrated.



The Woman

Photo credit: Bloody Disgusting

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